THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE V.V.S.RAO

WRIT PETITION NO.21418 OF 2001

DATED:5.8.2005

Between:

Sardar Ali

…Petitioner

And

Government of Andhra Pradesh,

and others

…Respondents

THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE V.V.S.RAO

WRIT PETITION NO.21418 OF 2001

ORDER:

The writ petition is filed seeking a Writ of Mandamus declaring the action of the respondents in continuing rowdy sheet against the petitioner and summoning him to Habeebnagar Police Station, as well as Task Force Station as illegal, capricious and mala fide.

The petitioner is a businessman. It is alleged that he was falsely implicated in C.C.No.304 of 1993 on the file of III Metropolitan Magistrate, Hyderabad, and T.S.C.Nos.726 and 728 of 1995 and 736 of 1998 on the file of II Special Metropolitan

Magistrate, Hyderabad. In both the cases, he was acquitted. However, a rowdy sheet was opened against petitioner and the same is being continued. Initially, petitioner filed a writ petition being W.P.No.12870 of 1999 to declare the action of respondents in openeing rowdy sheet against petitioner as illegal and arbitrary. This Court by order dt.15.7.1999 allowed the Writ Petition. However, the respondents did not close the rowdy sheet opened against petitioner and after reviewing his case, rowdy sheet was continued. Hence, present Writ Petition.

A counter affidavit is filed by the respondents stating that the petitioner is an habitual offender and as close surveillance over his activities is required in the interest of public peace rowdy sheet was opened against him and the same is being renewed year after year after reviewing his activities and the action taken by Police is strictly in accordance with the Police Standing Orders and no rights of the petitioner are infringed.

The questions raised in this writ petition are squarely covered by the judgment of this Court in **S. Satyanarayana v. State of A.P.**. Therefore, the writ petition is disposed of directing the respondents to consider the request of the petitioner for closing rowdy sheet following the principles laid down in **Satyanarayana**'s case (supra), which are as under.

i. A mere conviction or convictions cannot be thumb rule for opening history sheet or rowdy sheet though history sheet can be opened even without conviction for the limited purpose of watching a person discreetly.

ii. At the time of opening a history sheet or rowdy sheet a competent officer has to apply mind taking into consideration the social background the proceedings in the criminal trial if a person is convicted and all other relevant material before passing orders for opening history sheet or rowdy sheet.

iii. A history sheet/rowdy sheet is retained for the period of two years only unless it is ordered to be closed by the Superintendent of Police earlier than two years. During the initial period of two years, the history sheeter or rowdy sheeter is entitled to request the concerned police officer to close the history sheet or rowdy sheet which has to be considered by the police officer in an objective manner.

iv. While passing orders for retention of history sheet for another year more, the competent Sub-Divisional Police Officer has to take into consideration the various factors, to wit, surveillance reports, the crime history with reference to the breach of peace of society during the preceding year, the social and political background of the person etc. If there is a preponderance of opinion among the surveillance officers that the person did not come up for any adverse notice and leading a blemishless family life it is a strong circumstance to order for closure of the history sheet or rowdy sheet.

v. When an order is passed by the competent police officer for retention of the history sheet by simply endorsing on the report/letter of the S.H.O. a single line order, that by itself cannot be a ground to continue the rowdy sheet.

vi. Any order passed by the Sub-Divisional Police Officer shall have to be supported by reasons. The reasons need not be communicated but to be recorded.

vii. The orders for opening or retention of history sheet/rowdy sheet are passed under the administrative instructions/guidelines. If such an order is challenged, the competent authority has to place the reasons before the Court which justify retention of history sheet/rowdy sheet. Further, it is always better for the Police Officer to record his own reasons for retention/opening of the history sheet/rowdy sheet.

viii. In the event as mentioned in conclusion 4.7 it is always open to the Court of judicial review to direct the Sub-Divisional Police Officer to reconsider his decision and pass appropriate orders. But whatever be the events in the guise of opening/retention of history sheet a person's liberty, right to privacy and other freedoms under Article 19 of the Constitution of India cannot be infringed under any circumstances.

ix. It is to be remembered that any order of the competent police officer which is not supported by reasons is itself unreasonable and arbitrary and can be termed as mala fide in the sense that it is contrary to the purpose for which the Police Officer is authorised under relevant Police Standing Orders. Hence, if the Court comes to the conclusion that the order of the Sub-Divisional Police Officer is contrary to the purpose for which surveillance is authorised, the action shall be set at naught forthwith on the principle that what is unreasonable and unfair is arbitrary and such arbitrary exercise of power amounts to exercising, the power mala fide.

The petitioner is, however, at liberty to approach the third respondent by filing appropriate representation for closing rowdy sheet, if the same is still continued. This Court in W.P.No.12870 of 1999 filed by petitioner herein quashed the rowdy sheet by order dt.15.7.1999. The third respondent should also take this into consideration while passing appropriate orders in the matter.

The writ petition is accordingly disposed of. No costs

_____

2005. (V.V.S.RAO, J)

bnr